## ABSTRACT

A stream of bits are received in a first integrated circuit (IC) device, where the stream represents a sequence of symbols transmitted by a second IC device over a serial point to point link that couples the two devices. First and second M-bit sections of the stream are compared to a non-data symbol. The second M-bit section is offset by one bit in the stream relative to the first section. If there is a match between the first section and the non-data symbol, then a flag indicating symbol alignment is asserted. Each of multiple, consecutive, non overlapping M-bit sections that follow the first section are then to be treated as separate symbols. Other embodiments are also described and claimed.